

labor leaders like Billy Lee, in the pursuit of defending the interests of working Americans. In my 20 years as an elected official—I have never voted against the working men and women in this room. I stand as a proud friend of labor and always will be.

In Billy Lee's time as International Association of Machinists President, he served among those brave leaders on the front lines of the fight to achieve greater worker compensation, improved employee health benefits, social security and pension benefits, and better worker rights. The International Association of Machinists, a large and diverse organization, represents 730,000 members across North America. The Northeast Florida branch, with dedicated Members like Billy, fights to carry out the IAM's union's righteous cause, to stand up against big business and fight to protect the workers of America.

Billy was survived by his wife Joyce, his son Michael Ray Lee, daughter Marilyn Lee, and eight grandchildren. A family oriented man, Billy enjoyed fishing, gardening and particularly loved cookouts. Billy Lee was loved and well respected by everyone that knew him. He will be dearly missed by his family, the community, and by those who fought alongside him in the labor movement.

FOREST RESTORATION AND FIRE RISK REDUCTION ACT

HON. TOM UDALL

OF NEW MEXICO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. UDALL of New Mexico. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act, a bill based upon the collaboration with my colleague and cousin, Representative MARK UDALL of Colorado.

In the 134 million-acre interior West, scientific assessments indicate that in pre-industrial times, 50 to 80 million acres burned per year. In the 1900's, however, fire suppression became federal policy. A century of fire suppression, excessive logging and overgrazing of livestock has led, in many areas, to overstocked forests of second-growth trees. These forests are extremely susceptible to the damaging effects of high-intensity fire.

In terms of resource damage, catastrophic wildfire affects our forest's ecosystems by destroying critical habitat, eroding soil, changing air temperature, moisture content and productivity, while at the same time, facilitating the spread of invasive weeds and non-native plants, and generating air pollution. This matter is complicated further by rising fiscal costs that force the increased population and development of "wildland/urban" interface areas. In recent years, the Forest Service generally has expended \$500–600 million annually in fire preparedness, suppression, and rehabilitation. Within the past last three years, however, over a billion dollars have been spent.

Inseparably related to current forest management practices is the issue of pervasive drought. As we all know, our nation has been suffering from severe drought conditions for several years now, and so far this year proves to be no different. Rain and snowfall in New Mexico and many of our western states is to date far below averages. As a result of the continuing drought in the west, we have also

experienced some of the worst wildfire seasons in modern history. The relatively recent Cerro Grande fire in New Mexico, the Hayman fire in Colorado, and the Rodeo-Chediski fires in Arizona illustrate the severity of the situation. These fires were catastrophic in proportion and inflicted grave environmental, social, and economic impacts on the affected local communities. Consequently, these, and other areas affected by the devastating affects of raging wildfires, face years of restorative efforts and depend upon the development and implementation of a viable fire hazard mitigation program on National Forest System lands to avert such disasters in the future.

In response to these concerns and those I heard from constituents, I have worked closely with Representative MARK UDALL to devise a bill that takes these issues to task. Our "Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act" refocuses the implementation of the National Fire Plan (NFP) to areas designated as "wildland/urban interface," the critical zones that are of the highest risk to people, property and water supplies, by redirecting NFP funding and hazardous fuels reduction projects through state selection panels.

A general consensus exists today that thinning our forests—by controlled burns or mechanical means—will lessen the likelihood of unusually severe fires. However, the Bush Administration contends that to facilitate such thinning projects, the environmental laws and procedures for public comment and participation are obstacles that must be removed. I believe that this contention is incomprehensible and conceptually flawed.

The exemption of fire-risk reduction projects from environmental review, public comments and administrative appeals, circumvents established policy of public participation, an important aspect of our democratic process for making decisions affecting public lands. Furthermore, excluding public comment would not assist in developing sound forest management. The bill we are introducing today maintains these sound principles of law and public policy, and makes some relatively innocuous procedural concessions that can expedite the process of resolving appeals.

I anticipate that collaboration between state and federal land managers, and local and tribal communities in both decision and implementation activities may contribute to the development of cost-effective restoration activities, empower diverse organizations to implement activities that value local and traditional knowledge, build ownership and civic pride, and ensure healthy, diverse, and productive forests and watersheds. Such collaboration would result in the efficient restoration of areas distressed by wildfires and help protect our homeowners and businesses from future losses.

I believe, as all of us from the western United States would likely agree, that it is much better to support proactive preventative maintenance programs to reduce fire risks than it is to wait to do something once a fire occurs. We need legislation that will reduce the potential for catastrophic fires and protect our communities, and aid in the restoration of lands that may meet the same unfortunate fate as did those in the Cerro Grande blaze. The "Forest Restoration and Fire Risk Reduction Act" will accomplish these common goals.

A TRIBUTE TO THE LIFE AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF LOUIS L. RAMSAY, JR.

HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to a distinguished constituent and leader in my district, whose professional and civic contributions have helped to shape the business climate in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and throughout the state.

Louis Ramsay, Jr. was born in 1918 in Fordyce, Arkansas, in rural Dallas County. He grew up attending the Fordyce public schools, and went on to earn pre-law and law degrees from the University of Arkansas. After law school, he joined the Law Firm of Coleman and Gantt, where he became a Partner in 1948. For the past 54 years he has been with the firm now known as Ramsay, Bridgeforth, Harrelson & Starling, where he continues to serve as "Of Counsel." He was elected President of Simmons First National Bank in 1970 and served as Chairman and CEO from 1973–1983. He currently serves as Chairman of the Executive Committee of Simmons First National Corporation. He is the only person in the state's history to have served as President of the Arkansas Bar Association and the Arkansas Bankers Association.

Louis Ramsay was recently honored with an induction into the Arkansas Business Hall of Fame, and I cannot think of a more worthy businessman for this distinction. Ramsay has made it a personal mission to use his standing in the business community to better the entire community. He has worked to improve the state's higher education system through service to the University of Arkansas's campuses, including Pine Bluff. He has served as President of the Pine Bluff Chamber of Commerce, the Pine Bluff Rotary Club, Fifty for the Future of Pine Bluff, and countless other organizations aimed at improving the quality of life in the area.

If we can learn one lesson from the exemplary life and career of Louis Ramsay, it is the value of service. He has served the community of Pine Bluff and the state of Arkansas, he has served our country with distinction in World War II as a pilot in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, and he has served his family and his neighbors as well. I thank Mr. Ramsay for his commitment to improving our state, and I congratulate him on this prestigious distinction.

A SALUTE TO THE GREAT LAKES NAVY BANDSMEN

HON. BOBBY L. RUSH

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. RUSH. Mr. Speaker, I come before the House Chamber this evening pleased and honored to salute the over five thousand African American musicians who, during World War II, played in the band of the Great Lakes Naval Base in Illinois. These highly talented musicians played an important part in our nation's history and this weekend, many of them

will be reuniting for the first time in over fifty years.

If you were black and in the Navy before 1942, the only service you could render is that of mess attendant or steward. These positions were lowly and limited. So, in an effort to elevate their position and further integrate America's armed forces, then President Franklin Delano Roosevelt recruited and trained black musicians for service in a Naval band. These men became the members of the Great Lakes Band.

During the war, these extraordinary musicians traveled around the country lifting the spirits of servicemen and civilians with their melodies. In fact, it has been said that there has never been so many good musicians at any one place, at any one time, as there were at Great Lakes.

In spite of their committed and unprecendented service to our country, there is little awareness of their contributions and acknowledgments have been few. Mr. Speaker, that is why, especially as we come to the end of Black History Month, I believe it is highly appropriate, to ask my colleagues to join me in a salute to these extraordinary veterans. Their contributions are far-reaching, long-lasting, and worthy of our praise.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
MEMORIAL

HON. DIANE E. WATSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Ms. WATSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise to encourage my colleagues to cosponsor a bill I have introduced today, which will extend the authority to construct a memorial to Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. here in our nation's capital.

I must commend Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated, of which Dr. King was a member, for their tireless efforts in bringing this project to fruition. In 1996, Congress authorized the fraternity to establish a foundation to manage the fundraising and design of a memorial to Dr. King. Alpha Phi Alpha accomplished both tasks by launching the Martin Luther King Jr. National Memorial Project Foundation Fund, Incorporated and developing and appropriate design.

The site for the monument covers four acres on the Tidal Basin between the Presidents Lincoln and Jefferson memorials. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will be the first African American honored as such on the Mall of the nation's capital. Similar to the everlasting work and message of Dr. King, the memorial will last in perpetuity.

Mr. Speaker, it is long overdue that a monument is raised to honor the life and legacy of Dr. King. He made an enormous impact on America's collective moral fiber like no other human being. His principles of non-violence are universal and helped millions of people to overcome what seemed like insurmountable obstacles. It is fitting that his image be placed in the nation's capitol and enjoy the same status and significance as others who have left an indelible imprint on our nation and the world.

I encourage my colleagues to cosponsor this measure.

INTRODUCTION OF THE CLEAN
WATER AUTHORITY RESTORA-
TION ACT OF 2003

HON. JAMES L. OBERSTAR

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. OBERSTAR. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to restore protection from destruction and pollution to all of the Nation's waters, including wetlands. This bill will amend the Clean Water Act to reestablish the original intent of Congress in that 1972 law to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.

In January 2001, the Supreme Court issued an opinion that denies federal Clean Water Act protection for thousands of acres of waters that serve as habitat for migratory birds. Congress must approve this bill to overturn that decision—the Solid Waste Agency of Northern Cook County v. Army Corps of Engineers (The SWANCC case). This case was decided 5–4 contrary to the intent of Congress and against the grain of nearly 30 years of judicial and administrative precedent.

Unfortunately, since the Court's decision, the Administration has done nothing to rectify this misguided and misinformed undermining of Federal protections over waters of the United States, including wetlands. Where the environmentally responsible position to limit the impact on our nation's environment would have been to narrowly interpret the SWANCC decision and to support Congressional action to overturn this decision, the Administration has, instead, proposed to explore amending its rules and regulations to expand the list of waters not covered by the Clean Water Act. Instead of supporting efforts to correct the damage, the Administration's action continues the abandonment of at least one-fifth of the nation's waters. This is unconscionable.

Until the Supreme Court's decision in the SWANCC case, section 404 of the Clean Water Act served as the primary federal protection for wetlands that serve important habitat, flood control and water quality improvement functions. In the absence of section 404 protection, small, isolated waters, including wetlands, could be filled or drained without regard to the impact on the environment or human needs.

The Supreme Court has adopted a very narrow reading of the intent of Congress in drafting the Clean Water Act and has determined that protection of small water bodies is beyond the reach of the Act. As is stated in the dissenting opinion, "the Court takes an unfortunate step that needlessly weakens our principal safeguard against toxic water." I agree and would further observe that the Court's decision opens an opportunity for waters across the Nation to be destroyed and degraded—and one which this Administration is all too willing to exploit.

A bedrock objective of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act Amendments of 1972 was to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters. The legislative history and the statutory language of the Clean Water Act make it abundantly clear that Congress intended the broadest possible constitutional interpretation for the provisions of this precedent-setting law.

The essence of the Supreme Court's opinion is that when Congress used the term "navigable waters" in the Clean Water Act, Congress intended that there be some nexus to actual navigation and commerce. Congress, in the Clean Water Act, was very deliberate and careful to define "navigable waters" as, "the waters of the United States, including the territorial seas." Likewise, the legislative history and court decisions prior to SWANCC have given the term "navigable waters" the broadest possible interpretation.

The proposed legislation will eliminate the use of the term "navigable waters" throughout the Clean Water Act and replace it with "waters of the United States." A definition of waters of the United States also would be added to mean coastal waters, territorial seas, all interstate and intrastate bodies of water (including tributaries) to the full extent that they are subject to the power of Congress under the Constitution; specifically including a river, stream, lake, natural pond, mudflat, sandflat, wetland, slough, prairie pothole, wet meadow, playa lake, natural pond, and an impoundment to any of these waters. The proposed definition is a combination of long-standing interpretations of jurisdiction by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Corps of Engineers prior to the January 2001 decision. The bill restores Clean Water Act authority; the bill does not expand that authority.

Trout Unlimited, National Audubon Society, National Wildlife Federation, Sierra Club, American Rivers, Clean Water Network, Natural Resources Defense Council, Earthjustice, Defenders of Wildlife, U.S. Public Interest Group, Association of State Floodplain Managers, The Ocean Conservancy, the Izaak Walton League of America, and Clean Water Network support this legislation.

MILITARY RETIREE DISLOCATION
ASSISTANCE ACT

HON. WALTER B. JONES

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 27, 2003

Mr. JONES of North Carolina. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to reintroduce a common sense piece of legislation to help our military personnel preparing to retire. As my colleagues know, service members and their families will move many times in a typical military career. These permanent changes of station or PCS often involve considerable additional expense, including the loss of rental deposits, connecting and disconnecting utilities, and wear and tear on household goods.

To help defray these additional costs, Congress in 1955 adopted the payment of a special allowance—a dislocation allowance. This was done to recognize that duty station changes and resultant household relocations are due to the personnel management decisions of the armed forces and not the individual service members. This amount was increased in 1986 and again in recent years. This is an important benefit for our military members.

However, as important as this benefit is, there is a category of service members who are not eligible to receive the dislocation allowance—the military retiree. This is despite the fact a vast number are subject to the